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TAJIKISTAN

Food and Warmth Return to the House

USAID and its partners provided humanitarian assistance to help Tajik families cope with extremely cold winter.



Orasta from Garm City, Rasht Valley, Tajikistan shows her new clothes purchased with a US Government-funded coupon. Photo: Mercy Corps

“Now I can cook warm food on the oil stove and my children are no more starving. If we did not receive this assistance, I would not have known what to do.”

- Orasta's mother Muhayo Gafarova.

Eight-year old Orasta Gafarova had never seen such cold winter before. Her family – baby sister, mother Muhayo, and grandmother – had always had difficult times, but managed to survive. This time though, it was much worse than ever.

By January, the weather dropped below -30 degree Celsius, and their three-room apartment in Garm, Rasht Valley of Tajikistan, lost heating, gas, and water. The neighbors were struggling too, and could not help them. Gafarov family had nothing to eat for days. Fatigued by the hunger and cold, Orasta slept all day, cuddled next to her grandmother who often fainted from starvation. After multiple trips, Orasta's mother managed to receive a small amount of money from the local administration, but all she could buy was a few pieces of wood to save her children and mother from freezing.

In early February, Orasta's family received some food and supplies from the Emergency Response program, funded in part by USAID and implemented by Mercy Corps. The donation included 50kg of flour, 50kg of lentil, an oil-stove, 2 bags of coal, 2 blankets, a bucket, a lamp, 2 coupons for warm clothes, and two bars of soap.

“Now I can cook warm food on the oil stove and my children are no more starving, says Orasta's mother. “I will use the flour and lentils very economically to have food for a long time. If we did not receive this assistance, I would not have known what to do.” They are using the bucket to keep clean water for drinking, since the apartment building has no running water, and the blankets keep them warm even when the stove is not burning.

With the received coupons, the family purchased new cloths for Orasta who is proud to go to school with a new dress and not in an old and torn dress. She dreams to become a doctor and to treat herself and her mother free of charge.